

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, this week, representatives from several nations will meet in Bonn, Germany, to discuss the future of Afghanistan. The Bonn Conference comes exactly 10 years after the first Bonn Conference, which established the Karzai government. So right now is the perfect moment to assess and reflect on where we are and where we're going in Afghanistan.

By any measure, Madam Speaker, the war we have been waging in Afghanistan for the last decade has been a failure. Our hard-earned tax dollars have been tragically wasted on a policy that has projected the worst image of America to the rest of the world. It has undermined our interests and damaged our national security—and let's not forget the human cost. More than 1,800 American families will sit at their tables over the holiday season—tables with a person missing. If we want to eliminate fallen warriors, we must bring them home while they're still alive.

Hopefully, the Bonn Conference will pivot us to the next phase of our Afghanistan engagement: from military occupation to constructive partnership, from waging war in Afghanistan to helping in the spirit of peace and friendship. Ten years after we supposedly liberated them, the people of Afghanistan have enormous humanitarian needs. We need to help them rebuild their infrastructure, strengthen their democracy, and safeguard the rights of their people, all of which can be done for pennies on the dollar compared to spending military dollars. In short, we need the SMART Security approach that I've been advocating for years.

In Bonn, President Karzai is saying that Afghanistan will require foreign economic assistance for at least the next 10 years. The estimated cost of \$10 billion a year, which sounds like a lot for that support, makes you realize, however, that we're spending at least that much, probably more, every month in Afghanistan. As a nation, we should eagerly embrace the responsibility to make these relatively modest investments in nonmilitary aid to Afghanistan. It's the right thing to do, and in the long run, we'll discover it's a far greater investment than 10 more years of war.

The past 10 years of war have done little to improve the lives and to advance the rights, for example, of Afghan women. Many of us are familiar with the story of the Afghan woman who was raped and then impregnated by a male relative when she was 19 years old. She was then sent to jail for the crime of adultery. Her initial sentence was 3 years; then, after a second trial, it was increased to 12 years, but a judge offered her clemency under one condition—she had to marry the man who raped her. At long last, Madam Speaker, after a petition drive organized by the woman's lawyer yielded 6,000 signatures, President Karzai

granted the woman an unconditional pardon—she will be released from prison without having to spend her life with her attacker.

It's a relief that moral decency prevailed in this one case; but the fact that this qualifies as a human rights victory in Afghanistan reveals just how far we have to go. There are many more Afghan women like her who suffer humiliation every single day, who have no control over their destinies. The true measure of American leadership is what we do to help these women and so many other Afghans who want nothing more than to live a decent life of hope, freedom, and relative comfort. We won't help by extending a war that has already failed these people and has violated our most fundamental values. It's time to bring our troops home and to make the transition to SMART Security now.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Bryan Thiessen, Journey Church, Bridgeville, Pennsylvania, offered the following prayer:

Father, we thank You for this Nation, Your love, and, most of all, Your forgiveness of sins.

We acknowledge, as Scripture states in James 1:5, that You are the giver of all wisdom. May You give these men and women, whom You have placed in leadership over this Nation, Your wisdom in all their deeds and discussions.

According to Romans 13, "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established." May these here be good stewards of this responsibility, leadership, and Your gift of freedom for our Nation.

We ask for Your special protection over our military and blessing for their families. We pray for our enemies, as You instruct us in Matthew 5:44. May their plans be thwarted, and may they come to the love and grace that You offer.

In the only name through whom man can be saved, Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FLEISCHMANN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. FLEISCHMANN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND BRYAN THIESSEN

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce today's guest chaplain, Pastor Bryan Thiessen of the Journey Assembly of God Church in Bridgeville, Pennsylvania.

Since the first House chaplain was elected by Congress in 1789, it has been tradition for a prayer to open the House's daily floor proceedings, and I thank the Office of the Chaplain and the Reverend Patrick Conroy for allowing Pastor Bryan Thiessen to have the opportunity to continue this tradition and lead us in prayer.

Pastor Thiessen joined the Bridgeville community in April of 2011, along with his wife, CaRanda Thiessen, and has been a driving force in improving the community since the moment he stepped foot in southwestern Pennsylvania. During Pastor Thiessen's tenure, he has seen his parish grow in size, which can directly be attributed to the exceptional work he has done in leading his church. He has also been elected president of the Bridgeville Ministers Association, where he leads Bridgeville-area churches, nonprofit organizations, and community outreach events. He also serves as the Christian education director of the Southwest Metro section of the Assemblies of God. As director, Pastor Thiessen guides 35 churches in Christian education programs and ministries in the southwestern Pennsylvania region.

I especially thank Pastor Thiessen and members of his parish for making the trip to Washington this morning. The House is very pleased to have all of them, and we are excited to hear the words of the Lord he has chosen to share with us today.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

THE REINS ACT

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today the House will begin consideration of the Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny Act of 2011, also referred to as the REINS Act. This bill will require Congress to approve any Federal regulation that will impact our economy by \$100 million or more.

The Small Business Administration estimates that regulations are costing our Nation's citizens \$1.75 trillion per year. The current administration's report on Federal regulations listed over 4,200 under development since last December and over 200 additional regulations proposed this year, costing consumers billions of dollars, destroying jobs. This fact is another example of how out of touch the President is with the hardworking and deserving American families. It is time for Congress to take action and stop the imposition of these job-killing policies that discourage small businesses from growing and expanding.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

FACTS ARE STUBBORN THINGS

(Mr. COURTNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, America's third President, John Adams, once said, "Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence."

Well, Mr. Speaker, the facts now show that the health care reform law is working for America's seniors. This morning, CMS released figures that show that 2.7 million seniors saved \$1.2 billion in 2011 with lower prescription drug costs because the health care reform law is closing the prescription drug doughnut hole; 28,500 in Connecticut, 5,560 in my district, the Second Congressional District. The report also shows that 24 million seniors have used the annual checkup that the health care reform law now provides free of charge, a smarter, more intelligent way to pick up disease and illness for our elderly.

As President Adams once said, "Facts are stubborn things," and the facts show the health care reform law is working for America's seniors.

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THOMAS EDISON'S LIGHT BULB—OUTLAWED

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, freedom of choice is under attack by Washington. The government wants to control the light in homes and businesses throughout America. A new law bans the incandescent light bulb and will re-

quire Americans to buy the new, special \$3 government-approved light bulb. Soon it will be against the law to sell Thomas Edison's incandescent light bulb—the symbol of American innovation.

This kind of government intrusion in our lives has left many Americans in the dark about what's next, and the government invasion into our lives is only increasing. Since the Federal Government has taken the power to choose away from Americans, people are flocking to their local Wal-Marts to hoard the last of the incandescent light bulbs.

Government controls so much of our lives in the name that government is smarter than we are; but for now, it's turn out the lights—the party's over for Thomas Edison's incandescent light bulb.

And that's just the way it is.

VOTER SUPPRESSION

(Mr. HOLT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, the national move to interfere with the voting rights of eligible citizens is deliberate. In 2011 the number of States requiring strict forms of government-issued IDs has nearly quadrupled. Why the sudden increase?

Proponents claim that voter fraud is the driving force; yet there is no evidence of this kind of deception. What do they think? That there are droves of people sneaking across the southern border so they can vote or that there are 15-year-olds trying to sneak into voting booths, and so we've got to card them? This is simply discrimination masquerading as orderly government.

The Brennan Center for Justice estimates that one in 10 eligible registered voters does not have the forms of ID that are acceptable under these expanding State laws. We can't stand by and let big money and special interests manipulate the results of elections by enacting 21st-century poll taxes. Poll taxes were thrown out decades ago as discrimination and contrary to processes.

SAFEGUARD MISSILE DEFENSE TECHNOLOGIES

(Mr. BROOKS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BROOKS. Mr. Speaker, during the House Armed Services Committee's review of the National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA, I successfully proposed a two-tier amendment to protect America's missile defense technology.

Tier 1 bars the White House from giving the Russian Federation any American hit-to-kill or other sensitive missile defense technology. Tier 2 bars the White House from giving Russia any American non-sensitive missile defense

technology unless the White House first certifies to Congress that America's missile defense will not be undermined and that our technology will not be proliferated.

Senator MARK KIRK of Illinois is blocking the Russian ambassador nomination until the appropriate safeguards exist that protect America's missile defense technology. I applaud Senator KIRK's efforts.

The NDAA is now in conference committee. I urge the conferees to support the HASC amendment and to safeguard missile defense technologies that have cost American taxpayers so much and that have helped protect America so well.

HONORING UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE LADY VOLS BASKETBALL COACH, PAT SUMMITT

(Mr. FLEISCHMANN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLEISCHMANN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize not only one of the greatest coaches of all time but also one of the greatest people of all time, the University of Tennessee Lady Vols basketball coach, Pat Summitt.

Yesterday, Coach Summitt was named Sports Illustrated's Sportswoman of the Year, and there was no one more deserving than she. Not only is she the all-time winningest coach in NCAA basketball history, having well over 1,000 wins, including 16 SEC titles and eight national championships, but she is also an exemplary role model for the students she coaches and is a shining ambassador for the university she represents.

Earlier this year, Coach Summitt was diagnosed with early onset dementia, Alzheimer's type. While the news would be unbearable for many to take at such a young age, Coach Summitt has stayed on the sidelines and continues to coach the Lady Vols. She is, again, leading by example and is showing her players that, while life is full of obstacles, you can continue to achieve success through hard work and dedication.

Thank you, Coach Summitt. I am glad you represent my alma mater. Go Big Orange.

PROTECT THE MEDICARE PROGRAM

(Mr. BUCSHON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, as a cardiothoracic surgeon, I stand here today to voice my concern about the impending cuts to the Medicare program. I implore the Congress to craft a multiyear fix to the SGR—ideally, a permanent fix. This is a real threat to seniors across the country. Each year, the Congress continues to play politics with seniors' access to quality care. This must end.

Seniors, some of our most vulnerable citizens, may not be able to see the